UNITED
NATIONS

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General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

A/49/138
S/1994/526
2 May 1994

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Forty-ninth session
Item 72 of the preliminary list*
MAINTENANCE OF INTERNATIONAL
SECURITY

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-ninth year

Letter dated 2 May 1994 from the Permanent Representative of Albania to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government I have the honour to transmit attached herewith the text of a statement dated 30 April 1994 of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania concerning the recent provocations of Greece against Albania (see annex).

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 72 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Pellumb KULLA
Permanent Representative

* A/49/50/Rev.1.

ANNEX

Statement issued on 30 April 1994 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Albania

Yesterday, on 29 April 1994, the Chargé d'affaires of the Greek Embassy in Tirana, Mr. Tulupas, came twice to the Foreign Ministry of Albania and, on behalf of the Greek Foreign Minister, Mr. Karolos Papulias, in a provocative, slanderous and unethical manner, lodged a protest against the obstacles that the Ministry of Public Order had allegedly raised to the normal observance of Easter by the Albanian Orthodox community.

The Albanian Foreign Ministry regards this act as a provocative and premeditated one, that could be predicted following previous statements by the Greek authorities about their so-called concern as to whether the Orthodox Easter would be normally observed in Albania.

This provocation testifies to the presence of a clear link between these statements by the Greek authorities with regard to the Easter holidays and the act of the Greek diplomat in Tirana, and is aimed at spoiling the climate on the eve of the meeting of the two countries' foreign ministers at Zurich on 3 May 1994.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs announces that all festive ceremonies connected with the Easter holidays of the Albanian Orthodox believers have been and will be normally observed, because Albanian legislation ensures and guarantees for citizens who are believers the freedom of belief and worship. No complaint has been lodged with the Albanian State authorities by any secular or church representative of the Orthodox community regarding any obstacle or difficulty connected with the observance of festive religious ceremonies.

We recall that the Albanian Orthodox Church is and will remain autocephalous, and any interference by the Greek Embassy on behalf of the Orthodox believers is aimed at violating its autocephalous status and is regarded as interference in the internal affairs of the Albanian State.

The statement of the Greek Government spokesman on 29 April 1994, after the religious ceremonies had been held normally, ill-intentionally distorts the truth and facts, constitutes an undignified tendency to manipulate religion, whose freedom has been guaranteed in Albania, and throws doubt on the will of the Government of Greece to hold the foreign ministers' meeting set for 3 May 1994 at Zurich, a meeting to which the Government of Albania was seriously committed. It holds that failure to hold the meeting does not serve the mutual interests of the two countries, even less so the region, and that responsibility for it will fall on the Government of Greece.